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LETTER DATED 2 JANUARY 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of a letter dated 2 January 1998 which I received from the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee established pursuant to the mandate of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB).

By means of this letter, the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee has transmitted to me the second periodic report of the Member States participating in MISAB, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1136 (1997) of 6 November 1997. I should be grateful if you would bring the letter and its enclosure to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 2 January 1998 from the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the second report, covering the period from 5 December 1997 to 4 January 1998, requested by the Security Council in paragraph 7 of its resolution 1136 (1997) concerning the situation in the Central African Republic.

(Signed) Gen. Amadou Toumani TOURÉ
Chairman of the International
Monitoring Committee

Enclosure

Second report to the Security Council pursuant to resolution 1136 (1997) concerning the situation in the Central African Republic

(2 January 1998)

INTRODUCTION

1. At its 3829th meeting, the Security Council unanimously adopted its resolution 1136 (1997), which was essentially a continuation of its earlier resolution 1125 (1997). The Council requested the Member States participating in MISAB, namely, the International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements, which represents them, to provide periodic reports to the Council at least every month through the Secretary-General.

2. This second report describes developments in the situation in the Central African Republic from 5 December 1997 to 4 January 1998.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

3. The International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements, chaired by General Amadou Toumani Touré, is the body that directs the actions of MISAB, since it receives the necessary political guidance directly from the heads of State concerned, and especially from the President of the Gabonese Republic, who is Chairman of the International Mediation Committee.

4. The International Monitoring Committee has adopted a plan of action that reflects the gist of the main provisions of the Agreements of 25 January 1997 in the form of a timetable, a significant part of which has already been implemented or is currently being implemented.

5. MISAB is under the patronage of President El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon, senior head of State of the International Mediation Committee. It is under the political authority of General Amadou Toumani Touré, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee.

LOGISTICAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL MONITORING COMMITTEE

6. It should be noted that since its establishment by the heads of the States members of the International Mediation Committee, the International Monitoring Committee has received logistical and technical support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The continuation of such support will make it possible to carry out, inter alia, diverse operations, namely:

Political monitoring of the pursuit of disarmament operations in Bangui and later in other parts of the country;

Pursuit of the implementation of the provisions of the Bangui Agreements that have not yet been implemented;

Coordination of activities relating to the organization and conduct of various seminars and conferences provided for in the context of national reconciliation.

7. The International Monitoring Committee is relying on the continued support of UNDP to enable it to carry out its tasks.

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO THE MISSION

8. As indicated in the previous reports, MISAB receives logistical support from the participating States, France and the Government of the Central African Republic. It also received support previously from the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

9. While recognizing the generous efforts that the States participating in MISAB, France and the Government of the Central African Republic continue to make to assist the African contingents based in Bangui, it must be acknowledged that the material conditions of the troops stand in need of improvement, as they are far inferior to those enjoyed by other similar forces operating in other conflict areas. An appropriate solution to this state of affairs should be urgently found in order to avoid demoralization among the troops, which up until now have been carrying out their work with selfless dedication.

10. The International Monitoring Committee welcomes the establishment of a trust fund for the Central African Republic and the appeal by the Security Council to Member States concerning contributions to this Fund. It is important to emphasize that the ability to maintain security in the Central African Republic in a particularly sensitive subregional context will depend on the dispatch with which States Members of the United Nations contribute to the Fund.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BANGUI AGREEMENTS

Provisions already implemented

11. The provisions of the Agreements of 25 January 1997 on the formation of a Government of national union, the adoption of an amnesty law covering offences in the context of the third rebellion and the situation of former heads of State have already been implemented, which is to be commended.

Suspension of the parliamentary audit

12. The bill on the abandonment of the judicial enforcement of the parliamentary audit has not yet been able to be adopted following the intense debate on the subject that took place in November. This first bill was rejected

by a majority of deputies. Currently, the Presidency of the Republic and the Government are redrafting the bill for submission to the National Assembly for a second reading. An awareness campaign concerning this resubmission is currently being conducted among members of Parliament. It should be noted that the adoption of the bill is an important point of the Bangui Agreements. It is generally agreed that a second reading would be needed in order for an appropriate solution to be found. As an interim measure, President Patasse reaffirmed for the International Monitoring Committee his decision of 31 December 1996 to suspend the judicial enforcement of the findings of the report on the parliamentary audit. In other words, no judicial proceedings will be initiated until a definitive solution in keeping with the spirit of the Bangui Agreements has been found.

Disarmament

13. A coordination and security meeting took place on 8 December under the chairmanship of President Amadou Toumani Touré with the participation of the Minister of State for Territorial Administration, responsible for Public Safety and Disarmament, members of the International Monitoring Committee, the Command of MISAB and the principal officials responsible for various national defence and security services. The meeting made it possible to recognize that the strategy defined on 10 November has fallen far short of achieving the hoped-for results, which has given rise to suspicion and frustration among certain opposition political parties.

14. While some hope remains, certain indications lead us to believe that the recovery of light arms will not be as extensive as that of heavy weapons. Consequently, it was decided to return discreetly to the methods adopted during the first phase, which made it possible to achieve the results that have been noted.

15. The results obtained are described below. Some success has been noted since the decision of 8 December, particularly in the area of heavy weapons: all 120 mm and 81 mm mortars and all 14.5 mm machine-guns and 75 mm recoilless guns are now in the hands of MISAB.

16. Since the signing of the truce agreement of 28 June 1997 and the ceasefire agreement of 2 July 1997, the following weapons have been turned over to MISAB:

Heavy weapons

Designation	Quantity	Increase (4 December-31 December 1997)
120 mm mortars	surrendered: 4 out of a total of 4	2
81 mm mortars	surrendered: 15 out of a total of 15	2
60 mm mortars	surrendered: 14 out of a total of 19	1
14.5 mm machine-guns	surrendered: 6 out of a total of 6	
12.7 mm machine-guns	surrendered: 2 out of a total of 3	
75 mm recoilless guns	surrendered: 2 out of a total of 2	
73 mm anti-tank rocket launchers	surrendered: 66 out of a total of 67	
Rocket-propelled grenades	surrendered: 7 out of a total of 11	
Total	surrendered: 116 out of a total of 127	5
	(weapons recovered: 91.33 per cent)	3.93 per cent

Light weapons

Designation	Quantity	Increase (4 December-31 December 1997)
Hand-guns (misc.)	surrendered: 16 out of a total of 111	
Submachine-guns	surrendered: 304 out of a total of 459	2
Assault rifles	surrendered: 265 out of a total of 541	4
MAS 36-49/56-M14 rifles + muskets	surrendered: 662 out of a total of 1,181	10
Light machine-guns	surrendered: 52 out of a total of 80	
.30-calibre machine-guns	surrendered: 15 out of a total of 17	
Total	surrendered: 1,315 out of a total of 2,389	17
	(weapons recovered: 55.04 per cent)	0.71 per cent

17. In the light of the various factors listed in the previous reports, it is easy to understand why the recovery of all light arms remains uncertain in spite of all the resources brought to bear and the strategies employed.

Status of munitions and explosives recovered and packaged from 4 to 31 December 1997

Designation	Quantity	Remarks
5.56 mm rounds	69 092	+7
7.5 mm SLC rounds	14 000	
7.5 mm S/B rounds	123 954	
7.5 mm X rounds	34 719	+624
7.5 mm X S/B rounds	135	
7.62 mm rounds, NATO	15 962	
7.62 mm Kalashnikov rounds	42 060	+640
7.62 mm long rounds	121 261	
7.62 mm Tokarev rounds	2 811	+1
9 mm Para rounds	5 546	+23
.12-calibre riot control rounds	731	
12.7 mm rounds	3 191	+991
14.5 mm rounds	15 855	+421
37 fragmentation hand grenades	1 858	+1
Fragmentation hand grenades, China	3 174	+9
GR FLG AP34	16	
RPG 7 rockets	1 172	+21
73 anti-tank rocket launchers	9	+3
.37 stun hand grenades	1 047	+1
FL LAC F4 hand grenades	1 305	+1
F4 hand grenades	316	
Russian grenades	3	+2
60 mm mortars	1 821	
81 mm mortars	852	
120 mm mortars	211	+98
75 mm recoilless rifle rounds, US	168	
75 mm recoilless rifle rounds, China	223	No weapons in inventory
M79 40 mm rounds, US	6 060	No weapons in inventory
Time fuses (inactive)	2 325	
7.5 mm grenade cartridges	755	
Pyro detonator	6 100	

Total:

Various rounds	449 317
Explosives and detonators	26 659

Recommendations from the General Meeting on National Defence

18. This provision of the Bangui Agreements remains a bone of contention between those in power and the opposition. Indeed, although everyone is in agreement in recognizing that the rational and consistent implementation of the 282 recommendations from the General Meeting on National Defence can and should form the basis for the solution of many problems facing the Central African Armed Forces, it has proved difficult to find common ground for their implementation.

19. Of all the recommendations, two or three hold the attention of all political circles. These are the recommendations concerning the "dissolution" of the Centre national de recherche et d'investigation (National Research and Investigation Centre (CNRI)) and the Section d'enquête, de recherche et de la documentation (Survey, Research and Documentation Section (SERD)) and the recommendation relating to the reduction of the staff of the Presidential Guard.

20. These recommendations touch on sensitive areas in which it is at present difficult to find a modus vivendi between the head of State, supported by the political parties of the presidential majority, on the one hand, and those in the Group of Eleven, on the other. The International Monitoring Committee is very much aware of this situation and will pursue its efforts to find a solution in keeping with the spirit of the Bangui Agreements.

21. The restructuring of the Central African armed forces, the National Gendarmerie and the Central African Police Force, as advocated in a number of recommendations, appears to be the key to the response to be given to those recommendations. This restructuring was inaugurated on 8 December 1997 by President Ange Félix Patasse, together with President Amadou Toumani Touré, the members of the International Monitoring Committee, the commanders of MISAB, the Minister of National Defence, the deputy ministers in charge of army restructuring and disarmament and the heads of the defence and security services.

22. The general guidelines of the restructuring process were indicated by the head of State, namely, that the future Central African army should be a national, republican and multi-ethnic army that will participate in development and will be low in cost. As interpreted at the practical level by the MISAB general staff, the President's idea is based on the following essential constraints:

- The size of the future Central African army should be in line with the national budgetary capacity, i.e., the Central African army should be able to support itself, equip itself, teach itself and train itself with a minimum of external support;

- The army should be a representative sample of all the ethnic groups living in the Central African Republic and of all its regions;

- The army should operate on an apolitical, non-sectarian and non-tribal basis, i.e., according to the republican model, which is the only appropriate model for ensuring stability, territorial integrity and national independence;

- The army should have multidisciplinary capacities to enable it to participate in national development efforts, especially in the agricultural sector, and in the opening up of the interior for the necessary engineering projects.

23. A national commission has been established by the head of State and placed under the supervision of the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee. It is chaired by the Minister of National Defence and includes the members of the International Monitoring Committee, the MISAB Command and the heads of the national defence and security services. This commission has been asked to develop a restructuring plan following the guidelines indicated by the head of State. It has been meeting since 15 December 1997.

24. The implementation of the demobilization, retraining and reintegration project will help the army to become more capable of operating as a truly republican army. This project would already have been launched if administrative problems had not delayed the arrival of the project head, Mr. Gonzales, who will finally arrive in Bangui on 3 January 1998.

National reconciliation

25. This is the culmination of the long but exciting process of the implementation of the Bangui Agreements. As indicated in the previous reports, this phase is in itself a delicate process in view of the fact that its ultimate aim is to exert a positive influence on the individual and collective psychology of brothers who have confronted each other and maintained, or even cultivated, a climate of general distrust from the outset of the crisis. In practice it has fallen to the International Monitoring Committee, and more particularly to its Chairman, General Amadou Toumani Touré, to carry out the twofold task of managing and then eliminating this climate, hence the need to take a number of actions envisaged in the spirit of the Bangui Agreements with a view to restoring the climate of harmony and concord which prevailed in the Central African Republic at the time of the revered patriot, Barthélémy Boganda.

26. The International Monitoring Committee and the Ministry of Human Rights, National Reconciliation and Democratic Culture, with the logistical, financial and technical support of UNDP, organized awareness-raising seminars in various regions of the country between 18 November and 10 December 1997.

27. The systematic coverage of the country has made it possible to reach, within a reasonable period of time, all the populations of the country. The same messages have been brought to all of them, and rich, in-depth discussions have been held on the need to achieve peace and national reconciliation, conditions conducive to the economic recovery and sustainable development of the country. The conclusions reached during these seminars will no doubt constitute a useful contribution made available to the participants in the National Reconciliation Conference, to be held in February 1998.

28. With regard to the National Reconciliation Conference scheduled to be held from 10 to 14 February 1998, the preparatory committee established on 17 October 1997 is now working on the objectives of the Conference. The committee members are becoming aware, as they proceed, that the National Reconciliation Conference must offer the Central African Republic a framework to enable it to:

- Realize the dimensions of the crisis and the resulting climate, so as to be convinced of the need to create objective conditions for national reconciliation;

- Define the general guidelines for the sustainable development of their country, with an emphasis on ways and means of effectively fighting poverty, the main source of the suffering of the Central African Republic for the past two years;

- Recommend the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for promoting good governance, a precondition for building a democratic, modern nation;

- Draw up a final act in the form of a pact that could serve as a basis for the Government to elaborate a national constitution.

29. It should be recalled that, in addition to the regional seminars referred to in paragraphs 21, 22 and 23 of the previous report, preparatory workshops for the National Reconciliation Conference are scheduled. A youth meeting under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) took place from 10 to 13 December 1997. Another, larger meeting of youth will be held on 16 and 17 January 1998, and a women's forum will be held on 13 and 14 January 1998. All the preparatory workshops have played and will continue to play a significant role in the country's consciousness-raising activities.

30. With regard to the National Reconciliation Conference, it is widely agreed in various circles that a favourable climate for reconciliation should be created, with the following necessary and useful conditions:

- Full application of the various provisions of the Bangui Agreements, in other words, completion of the activities included in the timetable of the International Monitoring Committee (pursuit of disarmament operations, settlement of the issue of the parliamentary audit, indication of political will to make use of the recommendations of the General Meeting on National Defence);

- Continuation of the necessary and useful efforts (including a stepping up of the diplomatic offensive) to find a solution to the financial situation, which remains a cause of concern;

- Launching of initiatives designed to find a solution to the problem of the victims of the rebellions;

- Reassuring indications of prospects of reconstruction, rehabilitation and economic recovery.

COOPERATION WITH THE CENTRAL AFRICAN AUTHORITIES AND THE VARIOUS GROUPS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

31. General Amadou Toumani Touré, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee, took advantage of his recent stay in Bangui to examine the evolution of the situation with the main protagonists in the country's political and social life. Thus he applied himself to:

- The evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the Bangui Agreements;

- The search for solutions to those provisions which have not yet been implemented or those which are being implemented at a slow pace;

- The study of the various possible hypotheses during the post-MISAB period, in other words, after 6 February 1998, the date on which the mandate authorized by the Security Council in resolution 1136 (1997) expires;

- The joint search for ways and means of finding a solution to the thorny problem of arrears of wages and salaries;

- The study of the elements of the strategy to be adopted to convince the international community of the need to provide direct and effective assistance to the Central African Republic by organizing a round table of donors to be held during the second quarter of 1998.

32. From the summary he made while chairing a meeting of the International Monitoring Committee, the following conclusions made be drawn:

- Considerable progress has taken place since the signature of the Agreements on 25 January 1997 and has made a major contribution to defusing the situation;

- Much nevertheless remains to be done: some important provisions of the Bangui Agreements are still encountering difficulties in their implementation; these provisions must be meticulously listed and receive particular attention from the International Monitoring Committee, which will make new approaches to the various parties involved;

- Everyone in Bangui (the political class, civil society, the military and foreigners) is convinced of the need for the presence after 6 February 1998 of a military and security force which would help consolidate the peace and stimulate the process of national reconciliation; everyone recognizes that even though the elections are not an end in themselves, they deserve to be held in peace, calm and transparency;

- The Central African army needs to be restructured into a true republican army, drawing on the cooperation of available friendly countries; in other words, the Central African army must be capable of taking over from MISAB the various functions the latter is currently performing;

- The social situation continues to give rise to concern, and risks throwing everything back into question if an adequate solution is not found right away. The International Monitoring Committee urges the Government to do everything possible to place the national financial system, which generates resources, on a sound basis, and invites better understanding on the part of the international community, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions, in order to help the Central African Republic avoid social disruption;

- A national forum should be organized to discuss the important and delicate issue of the victims of the rebellions and make specific proposals to the Government;

- With the involvement of UNDP as lead agency, a round table of donors should be organized, to take place in the second quarter of 1998, with a view to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country.

33. On 17 December 1997, the President of the Republic dismissed one of the ministers from his party, the Mouvement de Liberation du Peuple Centrafricain (MLPC), namely Mr. Charles Massi, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Farming, who has been charged with offences which, according to the Government spokesman, took place while he was still serving as Minister of Mines in a previous Government. It should, however, be noted that Mr. Massi, who on 29 November 1997 had established a political association, the Forum Démocratique pour la Modernité (FODEM), wrote to the International Monitoring Committee on 28 December 1997 denouncing a manoeuvre designed to keep him out of the forthcoming elections.

COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

34. Pursuant to the Security Council's request to the Secretary-General in resolution 1136 (1997) to provide a report within three months on the implementation of that resolution, a multidisciplinary mission from the United Nations Secretariat visited Bangui from 6 to 13 December 1997 to collect the elements necessary for the preparation of the report. The mission, eight strong and headed by Mr. Youssef Mahmoud, Director of the Africa II Division in the Department of Political Affairs, met the head of the Central African State, the Prime Minister, the President of the National Assembly, the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee, the main ministers concerned, the UNDP Resident Representative and Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in Bangui, heads of diplomatic missions, the MISAB Command, the Command of the French Operational Assistance Elements, the Chief of General Staff of the Central African armed forces, the Director of the National Gendarmerie, the various groups of political parties, officials of the groups of affiliated trade

unions, leaders of women's organizations, employers, banking officials and heads of United Nations agencies based in Bangui.

35. The multidisciplinary mission thus had an opportunity to appreciate the evolution of the political, military, security and economic and social situation, and will be able to report a new assessment to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

36. Despite the excellent results obtained in agricultural production (in both cash crops and food crops), the Central African Republic, where industrial and commercial activities have clearly been in a state of paralysis for several months, is still experiencing difficulties in meeting its internal obligations (wages and salaries, pensions, scholarships, the functioning of the State apparatus) and its external commitments, in particular the repayment of the arrears due to the Bretton Woods institutions.

37. Moreover, the thorny problem of arrears of wages and salaries, pensions and scholarships provides a reason for the strike which is still taking place in certain sectors, such as education. The greatest concern of the Central African authorities is therefore to find the necessary resources to resolve this problem of six months' arrears of wages and salaries and several further months' of pensions or scholarships. The groups of affiliated trade unions, which hitherto have demonstrated a great deal of understanding and moderation given the situation, are beginning to show serious signs of discontent: in a memorandum made public on 12 December 1997, they threatened to express their frustration through serious protests. A demonstration scheduled for 15 December was banned, and its participants dispersed.

DEPLOYMENT OF THE FORCE

38. There has been no significant change in the arrangements made since the submission of the previous report. MISAB is continuing to ensure security in all neighbourhoods of the Central African capital by occupying 20 surveillance posts and is participating in joint security patrols in conjunction with the Central African security and defence forces in all districts of Bangui. Hold-ups, armed robberies and other criminal acts have become very rare thanks both to the progress achieved in disarmament and the constant vigilance instituted by the system of joint patrols.

39. With regard to MISAB activities, it is worth noting the moving ceremony held on 18 December 1997 during which the commemorative medal of the Inter-African Force was posthumously awarded to Brigadier-General Augustin Mombo-Moukagni by Colonel Alioune Ibaba, Coordinator of the International Monitoring Committee, deputizing for its Chairman, Amadou Toumani Touré, and acting on behalf of the President of the Gabonese Republic. A number of other individuals (officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks of MISAB, the Central African armed forces and the French Operational Assistance Elements, as well as prominent civilians from the Central African Republic and the International Monitoring Committee) were also decorated on this occasion by Colonel Talla Niang, Chief of Staff and Acting Commander of MISAB and his main colleagues, the commanders of contingents.

40. This ceremony is the second of its kind organized by MISAB following that which took place in July 1997, during which President Amadou Toumani Touré, Brigadier-General Edouard N'Killi, then Commander of MISAB, Colonel Talla Niang, Chief of General Staff and the commanders of the six contingents, the members of the International Monitoring Committee and officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks of the French Operational Assistance Elements and the Central African armed forces received this commemorative MISAB medal awarded by the President of the Gabonese Republic in his capacity as Chairman of the International Mediations Committee.

CONCLUSIONS

41. The success of the deployment of MISAB will depend above all on the understanding shown by the international community, specifically in the consistent application of paragraph 6 of resolution 1136 (1997); the Special Trust Fund established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the request of the Security Council needs to be provisioned within a reasonable period of time. Pending the adequate provisioning of that Fund or any other decision of the Security Council, an interim solution is desirable, namely extension of the effect of Security Council resolution 1136 (1997) relating to the mandate of MISAB for a two-month period.

42. The International Monitoring Committee hopes to continue to enjoy the logistical and technical support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in order to pursue its twofold mission of ensuring the political direction of MISAB and monitoring the implementation of the Bangui Agreements through continuing mediation.

43. In order to avoid any slippage or any risk of a return to square one which might lead to social disruption, it is urged that all measures should be taken at the appropriate levels, including the level of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to arouse a greater awareness among States Members of the United Nations, international organizations and financial institutions with a view to providing the necessary assistance to the development of the Central African Republic, as requested by the Security Council in paragraph 9 of resolution 1136 (1997). All of these measures will of course accompany the essential efforts of the Central African authorities. Any other approach might compromise that country's chance of turning the page of the crisis once and for all, and thus lead irrevocably to the failure of this special experiment in internal settlement which the current mediation in the Central African Republic constitutes.

44. As it has stated on many occasions, the International Monitoring Committee will continue to spare no effort in urging all the parties to the Central African crisis to continue to work with wisdom and dignity towards the effective implementation of the Bangui Agreements. This is the price of genuine and lasting peace.